

London District Education Council  
Munsee Delaware Community Centre  
Meeting Notes for  
September 28, 2012

Present: Shirley Miller, Natalie Fletcher, Gaylene Stonefish, Laura Spero, Marshall George, Starr McGahey-Albert, Leo Nicholas, Vicki Ware and Gwen Lavalley

Guest Speakers: Lesley Munteer and Jenna Robertson – Western U Engineering School  
Gina McGahey – AIAI Education Director

Meeting called to order by S. Miller. Introductions were made by all participants. Shirley provided LDEC updates, why LDEC was reformed, meetings will be held quarterly and would like to see each LDCC First Nation community host a meeting.

S. Miller made a request for a Co-chair; Starr McGahey Albert agreed to co-chair the LDEC with Shirley.

S. Miller gave a special thank you to Leo Nicholas and the MDN community for hosting today's meeting. Leo provided welcome remarks on behalf of Chief Waddilove.

S. Miller and Marshall George provided a brief overview of the LDEC.

M. George provided a background overview of when the LDEC, when first started back in the early 1970's. It was known as a committee. At the time the LDEC was more concerned about the First Nation students attending schools off reserve in neighbouring towns and cities. Hot topics of the day included: tuition agreements, bussing issues, Indian Act, teen drug and alcohol use, getting First Nation education counsellors into the secondary schools. The first Native Studies courses were developed and offered at Saunders Secondary School in the mid 70's.

Shirley provided information about the new directive from the LDCC to the SFNS Executive Director regarding the new challenges facing First Nations in Education. The Federal Government has undertaken a number of new studies in 2010/11 and 2012 to overhaul First Nations Educations in Canada. The Federal Government is proposing a new "First Nations Education Act" for all of Canada. This new Acts only includes JK to grade 12. The Chiefs in Ontario have expressed alarming concern about this new initiative in that it doesn't include life-long learning and will ignore our Treaty rights.

Shirley also expressed the need to share and exchange information within the district. We have a lot of talent in our own communities and have made much progress in education. We also need to take a look at what doesn't work well and find our own solutions. Shirley suggested future meetings could have guest speakers instead of a meeting. Speakers may include topics around; mental health issues, FASD, How to deal with Bullying, Suicide prevention, proposal writing and etc.,

Laura Spero provided information about FASD 1 committee she participates on. The Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Group serves all people; it's not just for urban people. FASD is very wide spread and affects people from all walks of life. However, there is hope....and a lot good information available for parents and teachers; research studies and teaching resources also for educators. L. Spero suggested an information session could be a future resource for LDEC.

V. Ware shared some the challenges and barriers she has experienced with her students; How to help students with mental health issues, tutoring needs on-reserve, lack of funding is huge barrier, proposal writing, you only get a small portion of what you actually applied for, students with learning disabilities and where to send students for help, lack of parental support and helping parents to support their child with learning issues. Fear of labelling and some don't want to be diagnosed. V. Ware stated NIHB does provide funding for learning and mental health assessments. Aamjiwnaang has a good working relationship with Dr. Michael Ray and Rebecca White.

L. Nicholas reported his experience with the Oxford Learning Centre in London. MDN students have very positive results with increased reading abilities and behaviour modification. MDN students have access to Oxford Learning Resource twice weekly. OLC provides an assessment every six months to show student improvement. Leo would like to see the service provided on-reserve rather than transport the kids into London. Bus transportation is an expensive item.

G. Lavalley – principal at Standing Stone School – shared information regarding her experiences. They have developed a broad network with the Thames Valley District School Board for resources. Students from Oneida attend schools in Lambeth and Delaware after grade 6. SS School also has good working relations with on-reserve daycare and Head Start programming. Biggest issues are with under funding. Not having enough financial resources to do the things that need to be done.

S. McGahey-Albert – Education Director for Chippewa of the Thames. COTTFN has similar stories as the other First Nations. Change is needed, there are a lot of barriers to overcome that have negative impacts on our students. Chippewa is seeing an improvement in their secondary school drop-out rate. Working on a Bullying Policy in their school, established a Child Wellness Action Team, administer their own post secondary program for about 200 students. Starr identified areas of need – support from parents, supports for behaviour issues. Would like feedback from the Chiefs – to see what they want from the LDEC meetings. Do we have a Terms of Reference we can work on?

Guest Speakers: Lesley Mounter and Jenna Robertson

Presenters provided a power point presentation on Western's Engineering Outreach Program to communities and students in elementary and secondary schools. Western's Engineering Faculty is looking to develop partnerships, and especially with the female population. They have developed inter-active hands on LEGO labs for several age level student groups. Recently completed their "wind tunnel" lab. Their outreach program is ultimately designed to promote science and technology awareness at an earlier age. Invitation for the First Nation schools to bring their students to Western on a field trip. Schools need to apply in September to field trip excursions to Western.

Nine different kinds of engineers careers were identified.

Gina McGahey – Director of Education for AIAI.

G. McGahey provided an overview of the education activities she is involved in on a political level. Current strategies underway include: modernizing child care in Ontario, Early learning, K- 12 Proposed Legislation.

First Nation Organizations are looking at Treaty Recognition in all of the proposed education initiatives. She currently has good working partnerships with IEC, Chiefs of Ontario Education Unit and AIAI Education Working Group has 13 members from their affiliated First Nations.

Recorder: Gaylene Stonefish, Administrative Clerk – SFNS post secondary program